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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION A/S SHANNON STATEMENTS ON
POPULIST GOVERNMENT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORT IRAN
CHILEAN ELECTIONS MISSION IN HAITI 01/19/06

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's most important international stories include A/S Shannon's statements on populist governments; the Human Rights Watch annual report; the Brazilian and Argentine presidents' pledge to discuss issues raised by Uruguay and Paraguay; and Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez's warning that his administration "won't be bullied," in his first public reaction to protests against two Uruguayan pulp mills that have sparked a dispute with Argentina. Leading "Clarín" carries an editorial on the UN peace mission in Haiti, and daily-of-record "La Nación" carries another editorial on the exemplary Chilean elections.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Now, populism 'is not necessarily bad' for the US"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (01/19) "Vis--vis the fear expressed by many in Washington of a 'populist wave' in Latin America, US Assistant Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs Tom Shannon said yesterday that 'populism is not necessarily bad.'"

"In Washington, where Republican experts in Latin American issues tend to ideologize whatever happens in the region, Shannon decided that the only valid tool is reality. This is why, whether he is asked about Bolivia or Argentina, his statements tend to contradict what is being said around him.

"Not long ago, shortly after US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice took over, the US Department of State warned about 'the threat posed by populism' in the region, mainly referring to Hugo Chavez. Now, according to Shannon, what populism shows in Latin America 'is the incorporation' of new popular sectors to politics. And this is partly an outcome of 'a successful democratization in Latin America.'"

"... Regarding Morales' victory, Shannon has a positive assessment of it, '(Morales) obtained 54% of votes. This is an extraordinary event. It is a fact that we should admit and respect, and I expect that we can find some common interests.'"

- "Similar although different"

Ricardo Kirschbaum, general editor of leading "Clarín," writes (01/19) "The US diplomacy decided to take down the changes that occurred in the region. A/S Shannon's statements... are an example of an updated Washington discourse regarding some Latin American governments."

"What is really new is Shannon's acknowledgment that populism is not necessarily bad but that it helps incorporate social sectors to democracy..."

"The USG official referred in this way to Evo Morales' landslide victory in Bolivian presidential elections. The US diplomacy will have to work based on this reality."

- "Washington is denounced for use of torture"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (01/19) "The government accused of the toughest charges from Human Rights Watch was not any one of the Third World but the US due to its double status as superpower and world parameter."

"Furthermore, according to Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, new evidence obtained in 2005 showed that torture and several illegal practices are the focus of the strategy adopted by the Bush administration ever since 2001 in order to struggle against terrorism, which undermines the global defense of human rights."

- "Human Rights Watch criticizes the (Argentine) Government"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (01/19) "Yesterday, Human Rights Watch urged President Nestor Kirchner to abandon his judicial reform draft bill. Also, it criticized the way the Government is distributing official publicity among the media."

"In its annual report, the organization also lashed out against the alleged intimidation phone calls made by the Argentine Government officials to journalists."

- "It depends on Mahmoud"

Liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald" carries an opinion piece by contributor James Neilson, who comments (01/19) "... Iran's rulers are not the kind of people you would like to see near a loaded pistol, let alone a nuclear bomb..."

"... It is at least feasible that some among Iran's current leaders may prefer divine glory to peaceful coexistence with the godless infidels."

"In that case, the worst will happen, as it has so often in the past... Even a small nuclear war in the Middle East would be disastrous for just about everybody. Among other things, it would bring an abrupt end to the great economic boom the world has been enjoying for the last few years... And because it would involve the US, which has many troops in the area, it could easily spread to other parts of the planet."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Chile and a lesson for democracy"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" carries an editorial (01/19) "Chile has just given a lesson for democracy not only to the other Latin American countries but to

quite a few developed countries... This election has confirmed the good health of Chilean Concertacion...

"The consolidation of Chilean democracy reinforces a seemingly increasing trend in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) of betting on reforms that are aimed at recovering sustainable economic growth while taking into account social exclusion and marginality of large sectors of the people. Everything leads one to think that our neighboring country will pioneer this change in Latin America."

- "The luck of the mission in Haiti"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (01/19) "Latin American countries are taking part in a rescue operation in Haiti."

"... Latin American countries participating in this mission should not let it fail, because this would set a very bad precedent on the actual multilateral capabilities to guarantee peace and respect for human rights in a country in which they are really threatened."

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